

AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAWINGS:

The attached two (2) drawing sheets include changes to Figures 1 and 2, which replace original Figures 1 and 2, and new Figures 3 and 4. A knife blade, designated element 14, is shown in Figure 1 and the reference number 7' is shown to designate the free end of contact lamellae 7 in Figure 2. A line 3-3 is shown in Figure 1 to refer to the cross-sectional view of Figure 3, and the designation "R. 302440" has been removed from the upper right hand corner of the sheet including Figures 1 and 2. Figure 4 is a cross-sectional view of the electrical connector without the knife blade inserted. No new matter has been added.

Approval and entry of Figures 1 to 4 is respectfully requested.

Attachment: One (1) Replacement Sheet and one (1) New Sheet.

REMARKS

I. Introduction

With the addition of claims 5 to 7, claims 1 to 7 are pending in the present application. In view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks, it is respectfully submitted that all of the presently pending claims are allowable, and reconsideration is respectfully requested.

Applicants thank the Examiner for considering the previously filed Information Disclosure Statement, PTO Form-1449 and cited references.

II. Objections to the Drawings

As regards the objections to the drawings, while Applicants do not necessarily agree with the merits of these objections, to facilitate matters Figures 1 and 2 have been amended herein and new Figures 3 and 4 have been added herein to even more fully illustrate the subject matter claimed. No new matter has been added. Therefore, withdrawal of these objections is respectfully requested.

III. Objection to the Claims

The Office Action objected to claims 1 to 4 because the free end elements on line 10 of claim 1 allegedly lacked antecedent basis and because this element and the insertion of the knife blade are allegedly unclear and not shown in the drawings. Applicants respectfully submit that claim 1, as amended herein without prejudice , provides sufficient antecedent basis for the free ends and amended Figure 1, as well as new Figures 3 and 4, clearly show the free ends of the contact lamellae and the knife blade. Therefore, withdrawal of this objection is respectfully requested.

IV. Rejection of Claims 1 to 4 Under 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claims 1 to 4 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph as allegedly failing to comply with the enablement requirement. Applicants respectfully submit that claims 1 to 4 are fully supported by an enabling disclosure for the following reasons.

M.P.E.P. § 2164.01 states that the standard for determining whether the Specification meets the enablement requirement was cast in the Supreme Court decision of Mineral Separation v. Hyde, 242 U.S. 261, 270 (1916) which postured the question: is the experimentation needed to practice the invention undue or unreasonable? Accordingly, the test for enablement is whether a person skilled in the art could practice the claimed invention

without undue experimentation. M.P.E.P. § 2164.01(a) requires that the Examiner consider all of the following factors in determining whether any experimentation is “undue”:

- (A) The breadth of the claims;
- (B) The nature of the invention;
- (C) The state of the prior art;
- (D) The level of one of ordinary skill;
- (E) The level of predictability in the art;
- (F) The amount of direction provided by the inventor;
- (G) The existence of working examples; and
- (H) The quantity of experimentation needed to make or use the invention based on the content of the disclosure.

M.P.E.P. § 2164.01(a) states that it is improper to conclude that a disclosure is not enabling based on an analysis of only one of the above factors while ignoring one or more of the others. The Examiner's analysis must consider all the evidence related to each of these factors, and any conclusion of nonenablement must be based on the evidence as a whole.

Applicants submit that the Office Action has not presented a prima facie case of lack of enablement as no consideration has been presented as to all of the above requisite factors, as required by M.P.E.P. § 2164.01(a). Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Claim 1 has been amended to recite that the contact lamellae are configured to spring off freely at a beginning of an introduction of a knife blade into the contact segment, and, after further insertion of the knife blade, only the free ends of the contact lamellae configured to come to rest against the spring element. Support for these amendments may be found in the Specification, for example; at p. 4, lines 29 to p. 5, line 12. Applicants submit that the Specification and the features of claims 1 to 4, in and of themselves, as per M.P.E.P. § 2164, enable one skilled in the art to make and use the subject matter as claimed in claims 1 to 4. In this regard, the Examiner's attention is respectfully referred to the Specification, for example, at p. 4, line 31 to p. 5, line 12. The Specification states that upon insertion or introduction of a knife blade contact lamellae 7 expand to a maximum position, at which they rest against the inside of external retention spring 3. Upon further insertion the contact lamellae give way in the direction of the entrance port of the knife blade prior to running up against the limiting elements of the external retention spring 3, which stop the way of any further deformation. It is clear from the Figures and the above description in the Specification that upon introduction of the knife blade the free ends 7' of the contact lamellae

are forced towards the retention spring 3 and upon further insertion of the knife blade contact is made with contact point 10 deforming the contact lamellae such that the free ends 7' approach the entrance point for the knife blade.

In view of all of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the application as filed contains sufficient information regarding the subject matter of claims 1 to 4 as to enable one skilled in the art to make and use the claimed subject matter without undue experimentation. That is, it is respectfully submitted that claims 1 to 4 are fully supported by an enabling disclosure. Withdrawal of this rejection is therefore respectfully requested.

V. Rejection of Claims 1 to 4 Under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b)

Claims 1 to 4 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 4,168,878 (“Risser et al.”). Applicants respectfully submit that Risser et al. do not anticipate the present claims for the following reasons.

Claim 1 relates to an electrical connector in the form of a socket contact. Claim 1 has been amended herein without prejudice to recite that the contact lamellae are freely movable and are configured to spring off freely at a beginning of an introduction of a knife blade into the contact segment, and, after further insertion of the knife blade, only the free ends of the contact lamellae configured to come to rest against the spring element and the contact lamellae configured to deform only. Support for these amendments may be found in the Specification, for example, at p. 4, lines 29 to p. 5, line 12.

The plug connector of the present application has an inner contact part and a retention spring, which at least partially encloses the inner contact part. The inner contact part has a contact section that includes at least three contact lamellae, which *overall* are freely movable within the retention spring prior to the insertion of the mating contact (blade of a mating plug connector). The contact lamellae do not rest against the retention spring via their full longitudinal extension, so upon contact with the blade the retention spring does not exert any force on the contact lamellae. This makes the contact lamellae easy to spread open, and the beginning of the contacting can occur with the exertion of low joining forces. Only when the mating contact has found itself in the contact lamellae and is centered therein do the contact lamellae come to lie against the retention spring and are subsequently deformed in order to then produce a strong contact pressure with the aid of the retention spring to bring about reliable contacting.

Risser et al. purportedly relate to pin and socket type electrical terminals. As can be seen in Figure 1, plug connector 10 has three contact lamellae 24 which are

surrounded by a sleeve 28 as retention spring in the contactable state of the plug connector. As can be seen from Figure 3, in particular, the contact lamellae rest against annular crimps 36 of the sleeve even prior to the insertion of the mating contact. This prestresses the contact lamellae. As soon as the mating contact is beginning to be inserted into the contact lamellae loaded by the retention spring, it must now overcome not only the self-equilibrating stress of the contact lamellae, but also the opposing force of the sleeve as retention spring. As a result, high, undesired resistance must be overcome already at the start of contacting, which makes contacting more difficult. Therefore, Risser et al. do not disclose, or even suggest, contact lamellae that are freely movable and are configured to spring off freely at a beginning of an introduction of a knife blade into the contact segment. As detailed above, contact lamellae 24 are in contact with crimp 36 even prior to introduction of the mating contact. Therefore, Applicants respectfully submit that Risser et al. do not disclose, or even suggest, all of the features recited in claim 1.

To anticipate a claim, each and every element as set forth in the claim must be found in a single prior art reference. Verdegaal Bros. v. Union Oil Co. of Calif., 814 F.2d 628, 631, 2 U.S.P.Q.2d 1051, 1053 (Fed. Cir. 1987). Furthermore, “[t]he identical invention must be shown in as complete detail as is contained in the . . . claim.” Richardson v. Suzuki Motor Co., 868 F.2d 1226, 1236, 9 U.S.P.Q.2d 1913, 1920 (Fed. Cir. 1989). That is, the prior art must describe the elements arranged as required by the claims. In re Bond, 910 F.2d 831, 15 U.S.P.Q.2d 1566 (Fed. Cir. 1990). As more fully set forth above, it is respectfully submitted that Risser et al. do not disclose, or even suggest, all of the features recited in claim 1. It is therefore respectfully submitted that Risser et al. do not anticipate claim 1.

As for claims 2 to 4, which ultimately depend from claim 1 and therefore include all of the features recited in claim 1, Applicants respectfully submit that Risser et al. do not anticipate these dependent claims for at least the same reasons provided above in support of the patentability of claim 1.

In view of all of the foregoing, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

VI. New Claims 5 to 7

New claims 5 to 7 have been added herein. It is respectfully submitted that claims 5 to 7 add no new matter and are fully supported by the present application, including the Specification. Applicant respectfully submits that new claims 5 to 7 are patentable over

the reference relied upon for at least the same reasons submitted above in support of the patentability of claim 1.

VII. Conclusion

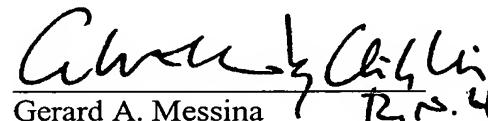
It is therefore respectfully submitted that all of the presently pending claims are allowable. All issues raised by the Examiner having been addressed, an early and favorable action on the merits is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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